

An aerial view of a white-water rafting team navigating a turbulent river. The raft is a tan-colored inflatable with "RED" and "SOLAR" printed on its side. Five people are on board, wearing helmets and life jackets, using paddles to steer through the churning white water. The surrounding landscape is lush with green trees, and the water is a deep, foamy green. The text "THE POWER OF TOURISM" is overlaid in white, sans-serif capital letters on the right side of the image.

THE POWER OF TOURISM





THE POWER OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Tourism is a rapidly growing industry with a very bright future. Since the dawn of time, people have been hit with wanderlust—exploring new places, experiencing new things—but in the last century, travel has truly changed.

There is incredible opportunity within British Columbia for tourism. The tourism industry is a key driver of economic success across BC—growing faster than the provincial economy as a whole, with increasing revenues, employment, wages, and visitors.

Together, we've fine-tuned and fuelled the engine that is an \$18.4 billion industry. We continue to engage our broader communities and push forward. From the smallest rural adventure guide business to our largest city-based hotel, we recognize that deep, collaborative partnerships enhance the power of the tourism industry in BC.



WHO WE ARE

Destination BC is the industry-led Crown corporation that works collaboratively with partners across the province to coordinate tourism marketing at the international, provincial, regional, and local levels, and to support regions and communities in developing or expanding tourism experiences, businesses, and jobs. In short, we market and share the transformative power of BC experiences with the world—growing sustainable social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits for all British Columbians.

Destination BC's strategy has placed it among the world's leaders in tourism. We are recognized for being a highly collaborative organization, with forward-thinking people who are champions for the industry's digital transformation.



In 2018 alone, we received several prestigious awards for our marketing work including BCAMA's
Marketer of the Year



Pacific Rim National Park

To achieve British Columbia's potential and compete to win on a global tourism scale, Destination BC has created detailed strategies for growth. The goals of our corporate strategy are supported by the goals of our marketing, and destination and industry development plans. To learn more about our strategies and to view corporate documents online, please visit DestinationBC.ca.

GOALS



VISITORS

Become the most highly recommended destination in North America



REVENUE

Lead Canada in growth of overnight visitor expenditures



INDUSTRY

Enable a collaborative, digitally-savvy, insight-driven tourism network



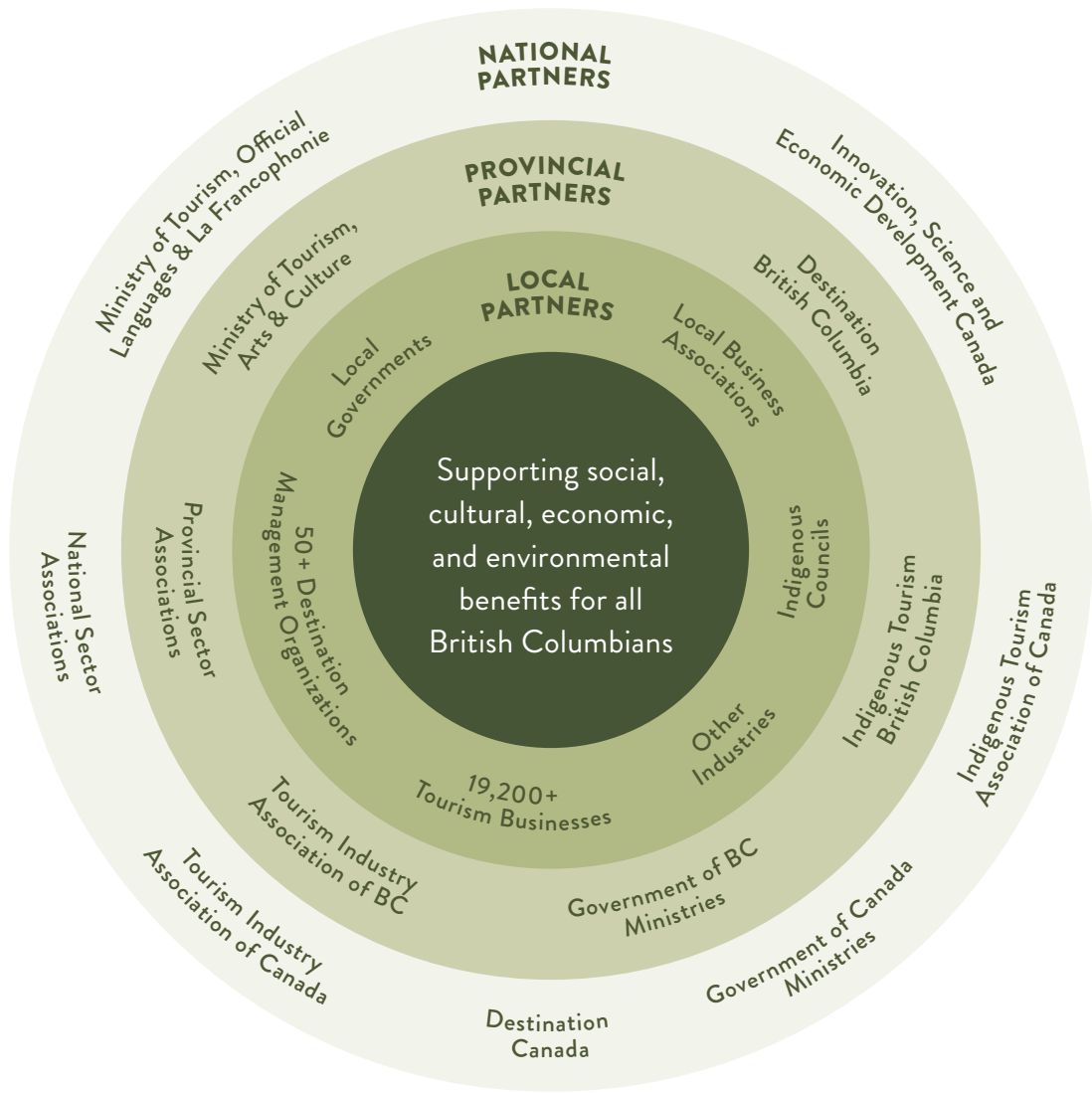
PEOPLE

Lead by being a collaborative, insight-driven, results-focused, courageous team

WORKING TOGETHER

The tourism industry in British Columbia is made up of many different organizations and partners. Through a collaborative ecosystem, together we showcase the safe and welcoming culture of Canada to the world while supporting our communities.

British Columbia’s Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture leads the alignment of provincial tourism priorities and sets the strategic direction while working collaboratively with other parts of the industry and supporting responsible tourism growth and development through its Crown corporation, Destination BC.








Tatlayoko Lake

HOW BC
BENEFITS

A full-page background image showing a man and a woman hiking on a dry, hilly landscape. The terrain is covered in sparse, yellowish-brown vegetation. In the background, a large, deep valley with steep, eroded slopes is visible under a clear sky. The hikers are in the lower foreground, walking away from the viewer.

Here in BC, tourism is a powerhouse. Providing economic benefits and improving the quality of life for residents, tourism in BC is thriving.

Near Jesmond

GLOBAL TOURISM GROWTH

In the 1950s, there were only 25 million international travellers in the world. Fast forward just over 60 years—to 2010, and there were just over a billion travellers. By 2030, that number will be getting closer to 2 billion.

Source: UNWTO



GLOBAL TOURISM GROWTH

Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world. It is the world's third largest export industry, and it is growing fast in an intensely competitive marketplace.

North America's international tourist arrivals were up 3% in 2018 from 2017. 2018 saw 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals worldwide, up 6% from 2017.



Source: UNWTO

5 YEAR TOURISM ECONOMIC IMPACT (2012-2017)



2017 ANNUAL REVENUE

\$18.4 Billion

=

+37%

Increase since 2012

Source: BC Stats



+27%

Increase in
GDP growth

Source: BC Stats



25.9M

YVR Passengers in 2018

=

+60%

Increase since 2013

Source: YVR

JOBS IN 2017

137,800

=

+16%

Increase since 2012

Source: BC Stats

EXPORT REVENUE

+80%

Since 2013

Source: Statistics Canada; prepared by Destination BC



+45%

Increase in
restaurant receipts

Source: Statistics Canada



OVERNIGHTS SINCE 2013

+30%

Increase in USA Overnights

+33%

Increase in International Overnights

Source: Statistics Canada; prepared by
Destination BC



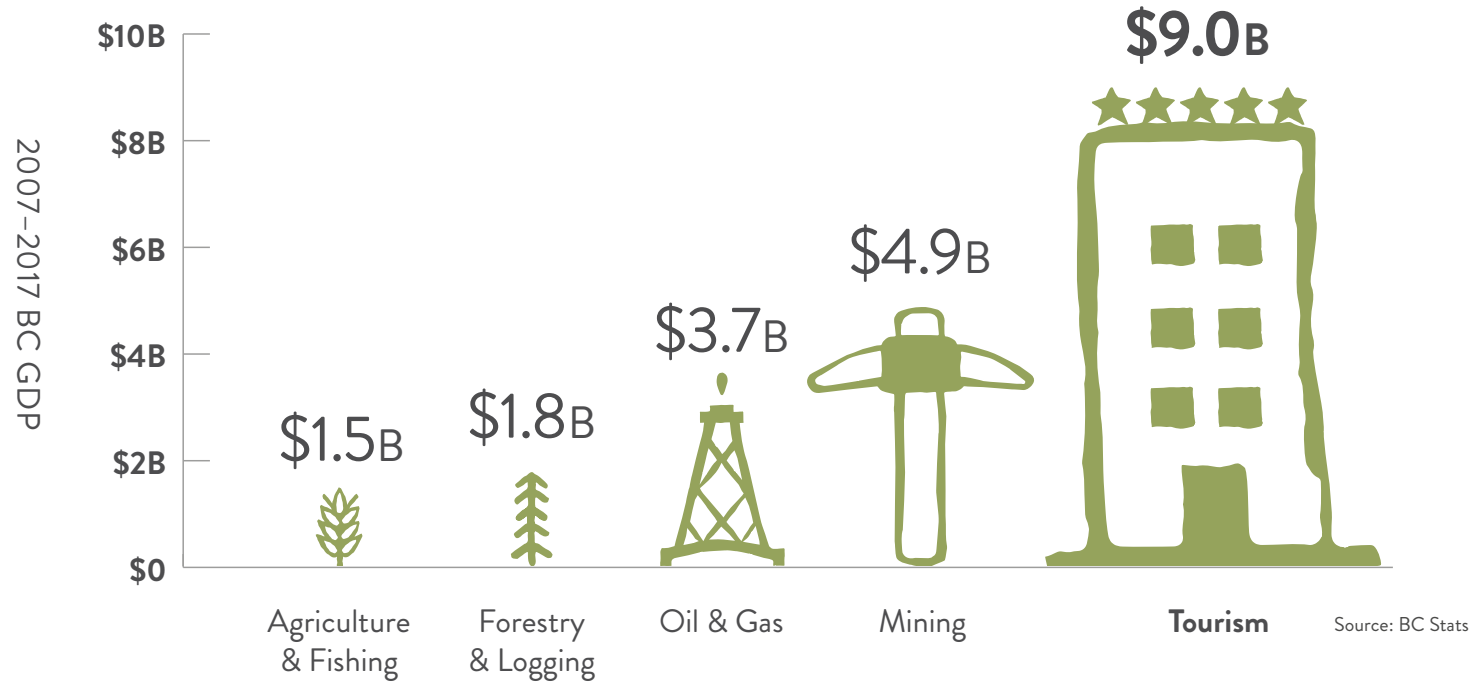
+55%
Increase in provincial
room revenue

Source: BC Stats

BC GDP

The tourism industry’s contributions to BC’s GDP have consistently grown. The tourism industry has contributed the largest added value to the BC economy between

2007 and 2017 relative to other primary resource industries such as oil and gas extraction, mining and quarrying, forestry and logging, and agriculture and fishing.



Tourism in British Columbia has seen record growth since 2014, after more than a decade of steadily losing market share as the global tourism industry expanded with new choices and greater travel volumes from emerging source countries. During 2016, 2017, and 2018, international arrivals to BC increased 12.3%, 2.9%, and 6.4% respectively.*




* Source: Statistics Canada; prepared by Destination BC



ECONOMIC SPINOFFS

Tourism is a powerful economic engine, and its spin-off benefits exceed that of many other industries, too. Most tourism businesses buy goods locally, hire locally, and retain their profits locally. And, nearly 90% of BC Chamber of Commerce members surveyed say tourism, as a sector, will become even more important over the next decade.

PER \$100 M
IN SPENDING

<div>TOURISM</div> <div>★★★★★ </div>	<div>\$69 M</div> <div>Economic Spin-offs</div>	<div>1,373</div> <div>New Jobs</div>
<div>MINING</div> <div></div>	<div>\$50 M</div> <div>Economic Spin-offs</div>	<div>438</div> <div>New Jobs</div>
<div>OIL + GAS</div> <div></div>	<div>\$41 M</div> <div>Economic Spin-offs</div>	<div>326</div> <div>New Jobs</div>

Source: BC Stats





Over 90% of tourism businesses are small businesses. Accommodation and Food are the largest sectors in terms of both revenue and employment, followed by Transportation and Retail.



VALUE OF TOURISM FOR RESIDENTS

The evidence is clear—tourism makes life better for all British Columbians. Not only does it make significant contributions to our economy, but it enriches our lives. It goes beyond economics, and extends to social, cultural, and environmental benefits, too.

Tourism growth creates many types of career opportunities for British Columbians. It supports part-time work for university students, to high-paying technical careers in aviation. The tourism industry is the largest employer of youth, who represent over 30% of its workforce. More than 100,000 new job openings will be available in tourism in BC by 2020*.

Tourism also supports a greater diversity of amenities, such as restaurants, attractions, parks, ski resorts, and events in communities across BC. Tourism has also increased awareness and recognition of British Columbia's Indigenous culture and heritage, and plays a positive role in preserving, sharing, and celebrating the culture and history of our communities.

*Source: go2HR



Nakusp



Crawford Bay

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

82%

of BC residents strongly believe that tourism supports a greater diversity of amenities in their community

81%

of BC residents strongly believe that tourism supports local businesses

77%

of BC residents take pride in making tourists feel welcome in their community

94%

of BC residents believe that the tourism industry plays an important role in the economic well-being of British Columbia

80%

of BC residents believe that the tourism industry creates many different types of jobs and career opportunities

81%

of BC residents agree that it is important to invest in promoting tourism

DESTINATION BC'S SUPPORT FOR TOURISM IN BC

FOR VISITORS



Market inspiring trip ideas to
international travellers



In-destination travel
information



BC travel information
in multiple languages



Travel itineraries and
recommendations



Support for
accessibility

FOR BUSINESSES



Over 6.5 million annual referrals to BC
tourism businesses in 2017–18



Research and insights to
support decision making



Global promotion



Training and development
opportunities



Funding to support Indigenous
tourism businesses

FOR COMMUNITIES



Over \$4 million in co-op marketing funds
across the province each year



\$2.3 million annual funding
for Visitor Services Network
(community-based visitor centres)



Amplification of local social media
efforts through over 4.5 million
uses of #exploreBC



Access to over 200,000
videos and images in the
shared content commonwealth



Brand advice and alignment with
Super, Natural British Columbia®

FOR RESIDENTS



137,800 interesting jobs all
across the province



Public awareness of the
large and growing workforce
tourism provides



Assistance to help communities
to enhance experiences for
tourists and locals



Collaboration with all levels of
government to ensure tourism
benefits to residents



Advocacy for
community cultural and
recreational assets

BRINGING TOURISM TO LIFE

Our programs have enhanced collaboration across the industry, built new networks within the tourism ecosystem, strengthened our short-term competitiveness through marketing, and driven our long-term competitiveness through destination development. Here are just a few of many examples:



AMPLIFYING LOCAL INDIGENOUS CONTENT

BC is home to over 400 Indigenous tourism businesses that have been created to welcome and introduce visitors to their culture. Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC) works with Indigenous communities to capture and create the authentic stories that inspire travellers to visit. Then, they partner with Destination BC to support the promotion of these stories, which allows for far greater amplification and awareness across the globe.

For example, ITBC created five videos that share the meaning of different words in Indigenous languages. Destination BC repackaged the videos to share through our Facebook and Instagram channels. The first video was of Denis Thomas from Takaya Tours teaching the world the meaning of the word “Takaya” (wolf). The video received over 22,000 views in the first 24 hours, which was a record for ITBC.



POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS ALONG THE GOLD RUSH TRAIL

The Gold Rush Trail follows the path of prospectors who came in search of adventure and wealth. British Columbia’s section of the Gold Rush Trail stretches from the Lower Mainland, north through the Fraser Canyon to Barkerville Historic Town.

Numerous organizations have now come together to develop and promote the trail, with efforts led by the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association (CCCTA). The CCCTA is one of five regional destination marketing organisations funded by Destination BC. The Gold Rush Trail also participates in Destination BC’s Co-operative Marketing Partnerships program, promotional activities, and destination development planning. Collectively, these efforts help to drive visitation and support rural economies along the trail.



A 30-YEAR SUCCESS STORY

For many travellers around the world, “Canada” and the “Canadian Rockies” are more recognizable destinations than “British Columbia”.

In order to build awareness, Destination BC and Travel Alberta worked together to attract travel trade and create itineraries for visitors to the West. It has been a collaborative marketing effort between BC and Alberta that saw the creation of the “Canada’s West” approach to international markets.

Travel trade brings in more than \$200 million in annual business to BC. Now in its 30th year, Canada’s West Marketplace trade show is the leading tourism event dedicated to driving travel to Western Canada by connecting tour operators with tourism businesses to generate new business. This event combines meetings, networking opportunities, and pre-and post- familiarization tours into an intensive, but highly productive, industry forum.



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH CTRIP

Destination BC’s partnership with Ctrip—China’s top online travel service platform— has increased promotion of BC’s travel products on Ctrip’s website, social media and other online channels, fuelling visitor growth. Ctrip has over 300 million registered members and over 200 million monthly active users.

As part of the agreement, Ctrip created an exclusive online landing page, *The Wild Within*, for Destination BC. Visitors can choose from four themed routes—“Urban Excitement”, “Food & Wine”, “Outdoor Activities”, and “Wildlife Watching”—based on their preferences. These routes were promoted across all of Ctrip’s website, social media, and online channels.

Ctrip also created an online flagship store and an offline store exclusively for Destination BC to introduce its various travel resources and unique travel experiences to as many Chinese travellers as possible.



Vancouver

MARKETING
BRITISH
COLUMBIA



TRADITIONAL MARKETING

We market British Columbia domestically and internationally. Our marketing has a vast reach—touching the hearts and minds of hundreds of millions of people, inspiring 22 million overnight trips around our beautiful province in 2018. Through innovative marketing, we seek to create a sense of urgency to visit BC through consumer, travel trade and travel media campaigns.

GEOGRAPHIC MARKETS

With international representatives in the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, China, Australia, and Mexico, we work in partnership with Destination Canada, key travel trade, and media outlets to reach target consumer audiences. Investments and channel mix vary by market, depending on the opportunities. Our collaborative approach with Destination Canada has grown international and US arrivals to BC by 33% over the past five years. During this time, BC has grown US arrivals by 30%, and outpaced US arrival growth (26%) to the rest of Canada.

To select the growth opportunities for BC, we evaluate a range of parameters and data from a number of sources to understand market potential, current economic factors, competition, and traveller interest and intent, to name a few.

We must be strategic in our market choices in order to maximize the effectiveness of our dollars, generate referrals for BC businesses and increase seasonal and geographic dispersion.

Destination BC will focus on the following markets in 2019:

Invest for growth



USA



China



Australia



Mexico



British Columbia

Maintain our strength



United Kingdom



Germany



Alberta



Ontario

Monitor and respond



Japan



South Korea



India



France

CONSUMER MARKETING

Our winning aspiration is to share the transformative power of BC experiences with the world, motivating our target travellers to visit British Columbia, now.

We achieve this through our stewardship and promotion of the *Super, Natural British Columbia*® brand worldwide. Our marketing activities are aimed at accomplishing the following strategic outcomes:

CAPTIVATE

Create an emotional urgency to visit BC now.

GENERATE

Generate leads for BC tourism businesses, travel trade key accounts, and online travel agencies.

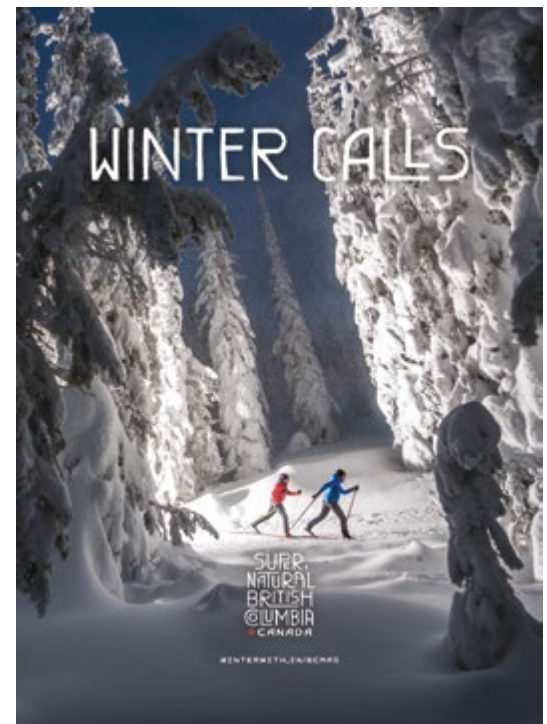
ADVOCATE

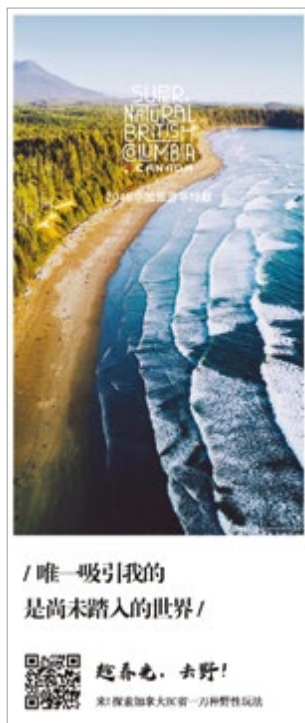
Encourage and amplify traveller advocacy about BC.

CULTIVATE

Build scale by working together through a powerful Tourism Marketing Network.

By working with our BC tourism industry and regional, community, and sector partners, we believe we can achieve exponentially greater impact than by working alone.







TRAVEL MEDIA

In 2018, over 500 global media outlets were supported to come to BC: *Sunset* magazine, *Outside* magazine, *SKI* magazine, *The New York Times*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Men's Journal*, *AFAR* magazine, *Forbes*, *The Times* (UK), *Sydney Weekender* (Australia), *Travel + Leisure* (Mexico), and more.

BC continues to attract enormous interest among travel writers and TV crews. Travel media coverage increased by 100% to hit an estimated 1.6 billion impressions worldwide in 2018.

Here are just a few of the highlights:

- Bella Coola Heli Sports was named World's Best Heli Ski Operation by *Forbes* magazine
- Vancouver and Victoria listed in top 5 cities in Canada by *Travel + Leisure* magazine
- Vancouver Island named in top 5 islands in Canada by *Travel + Leisure* magazine
- Four Seasons Whistler, Clayoquot Wilderness Resort, Wickaninnish Inn made the list of Top Resort Hotels in Canada by *Travel + Leisure* magazine
- The Wickaninnish Inn named #1 Resort in Canada by *Condé Nast Traveller*

Cultivating relationships with travel media, journalists, and social media influencers across the country and around the world, Destination BC and our partners create proactive opportunities to showcase BC's tourism stories, and in turn, are ready with information and support when media approach us with assignments. Destination BC actively invites travel media to visit and experience British Columbia on press trips. Supporting these trips is a cost-effective way of creating awareness for BC tourism businesses.

TRAVEL TRADE

A key channel to reach consumers in overseas markets is through travel trade. Travel trade includes online travel agents, tour operators, wholesalers, and travel agents.

Over 780,000 visits to BC can be attributed to 81 travel trade partners in six markets, directly contributing over \$223 million in revenues in 2018.



Great Bear Rainforest



THE CONSUMER BRAND

The consumer brand—*Super, Natural British Columbia*®—is the essence, or personality, of British Columbia. For over 35 years, our brand has inspired millions of people to visit BC. It continues to be a highly regarded brand, and the envy of many destinations. It makes us distinctive, memorable, and different from other destinations, in the eyes of the potential visitor. It promises a unique kind of travel experience. It guides expectations of what travellers will see and do, and importantly, how they will feel.

We have distilled British Columbia's defining characteristics and consumer value proposition into a simple and moving story about us, as a destination and as a people. It is a rallying cry that inspires all of BC's tourism industry to strengthen their resonance with travellers.

Consumers have very positive perceptions of BC. They see us as beautiful, friendly, clean, and safe. In today's intensely competitive landscape, our brand needs to work harder than ever to make sure that BC stands out from the crowd.

DIGITAL MARKETING

To compete for a traveller's attention, in what has become a crowded advertising environment, we must strive to create emotionally compelling, relevant, and helpful brand storytelling and travel information, and distribute this content through our channels and partner platforms where travellers now spend much more of their time.

As travellers continue to shift towards mobile travel planning and booking, as well as using multiple electronic devices during the path to purchase, Destination BC has more opportunities to reach travellers but less time to grab their attention.

Travel is one of the world's largest sources of online revenue. In the digital world, the battle for marketing revenue continues amongst a few key players. These platform businesses (such as TripAdvisor, Ctrip, Google, Facebook, Airbnb, etc.) alter our entire tourism landscape at a rapid pace. Each of these platforms is making significant investments into, and leading innovation in, the travel planning and booking space, where they are hugely influential.

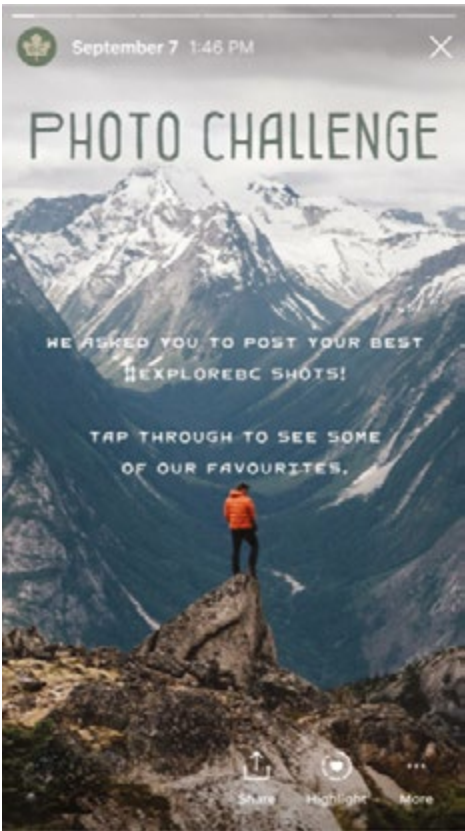
Major platforms are leveraging in highly integrated, detailed content at every stage of the traveller's journey (pre-trip, in-trip, and post-trip). These platforms, which have superior reach, budgets, consumer data, and marketing infrastructure, are the primary sources of travel inspiration and information.



SOCIAL MEDIA AMPLIFICATION

When choosing a travel destination, most people are influenced by the experiences and opinions of their friends, families, and colleagues. We know that word-of-mouth referrals and recommendations are the most powerful marketing tool in the travel industry. Simply put, social media is word-of-mouth on steroids.

Destination BC’s in-house social media team manages our global social media channels by planning, optimizing, and distributing content across eight geographic areas in five languages, and encourages sharing of authentic user-generated content and stories throughout those communities.



MOST SHARED
SOCIAL MEDIA POST

The footage of a surprise visit from humpback whales at the Great Bear Lodge was our most shared social media post and most-viewed video.

VIDEO VIEWS
11,000,000

REACH
17,000,000

SHARES
50,427+

Help us promote #exploreBC to your visitors and residents, and encourage them to use the hashtag on their social media platforms. The more images we can collect, the greater the opportunity to reach people around the world.

Source: HelloBC Instagram stories.



OUR WORK
IN ACTION



CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Smithers

DRIVING TOURISM TOGETHER

Destination BC's Co-operative Marketing Partnerships Program enables groups that share common interests and marketing goals that align with provincial tourism priorities, to leverage both private and public funds to achieve greater marketing impact and tourism revenue.

This is an application-based program that supports community consortiums, sector organizations, or approved individual and paired communities in BC.

BC has played a major role in the history of mountain biking, and continues to hold an international reputation as the most sought-after destination for mountain biking in the world. The Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association (WCMBTA), in partnership with Destination BC, will secure and protect that position by continuing to bring mountain biking marketing efforts together from around the province, and providing a safe and sustainable tourism experience.

According to Martin Littlejohn, executive director of the WCMBTA, one of the most game-changing things that happened to mountain biking in BC was when Destination BC introduced the Co-operative Marketing Partnerships Program.

“Not only has it encouraged greater engagement and more investment from communities, but it helped elevate mountain biking collaborative marketing efforts to a whole new level,” said Littlejohn. “Now, most of the province is covered because every region has communities or a sub-regional marketing consortium for mountain biking, in addition to our provincial Mountain Biking BC program.”

Further, many communities and tourism businesses that cater to mountain bikers are seeing growth in the number of visitors. The Sea-to-Sky Corridor, one of the top mountain biking destinations in the world, grew from roughly 200,000 rides in 2006 to 1.2 million in 2016, with visitor expenditures growing from almost \$32 million to over \$70 million annually. Wherever mountain biking is seen around the world—through images, videos, or text—BC is always well represented.

“BC’s mountain biking destinations have a golden opportunity to stay ahead of the competition and remain at the top, but they need the marketing support,” said Littlejohn.

To learn more about program guidelines and how to apply, visit DestinationBC.ca.



DID YOU KNOW?



Mountain biking continued to see tremendous global growth over the past five years. Industry analysts predict an approximate 10% annual growth rate between 2019 and 2022*.

* Source: Technavio



Market potential in BC is huge: 1 in 5 British Columbians (21%) participate in mountain biking.**

** 2009 Outdoor Recreation Study, BC Resident Participation



At least 29 communities and 8 resorts located in every region of the province are actively promoting their authorized mountain bike trails as visitor experiences and have the capacity to manage increased growth.



Cassiar Cannery

ENCOURAGING AND SUPPORTING INDUSTRY LEARNING

Tourism industry members can gain inspiration and benefit from Destination BC's new online Learning Centre to support their business.

Open 24/7, this digital library provides the tourism industry with access to free resources and tools under a range of subjects. Explore featured articles, guides, templates and checklists, videos, and more to help you amplify your marketing efforts, enrich your visitor's experience, and generate tangible business results.

 Digital Marketing Scale your marketing efforts, strengthen online presence, and deliver compelling content that speaks to your current fans and connects with prospective visitors. LEARN MORE -->	 Experience Development Create unforgettable experiences, programs, and services for your visitors. LEARN MORE -->	 Social Media Marketing Build your reputation and amplify your word-of-mouth marketing campaigns on social media. LEARN MORE -->	 Travel Trade & Travel Media Work with Travel Trade and Travel Media to increase awareness of your tourism experiences with BC's top international markets. LEARN MORE -->
 Applying Insights Use research and analytics to gain insights into your visitors, to create relevance in your marketing and experience activities, and to measure results. LEARN MORE -->	 Safety & Emergency Preparedness Plan, prepare, and respond to unexpected emergencies as they arise. LEARN MORE -->	 Super, Natural British Columbia Destination Brand Browse brand resources and tools that align with British Columbia's destination brand, Super, Natural British Columbia. LEARN MORE -->	

Learning Centre available at DestinationBC.ca/learning-centre

For many years, Destination BC has been helping tourism businesses grow by enhancing their visitor experience. The Cassiar Cannery, formerly a salmon cannery that now offers exceptional guest experiences, is an inspiring example of how remarkable experiences can increase revenues and enhance reputation.



Stunning dinner views at Cassiar Cannery

In 2015, at the end of a successful season, Justine Crawford, owner of Cassiar Cannery, started thinking about how to expand beyond the popular summer months.

Through coaching as part of Destination BC's experience development workshop, she created two experience packages—a Women's Rejuvenation Weekend and an Ecology Week. She offered the new packages in the spring and fall of 2016 as a test. The experiences were 80% sold out in the first year, and became an ongoing part of their retreat offerings, still going strong today!

There was so much positive awareness from these experiences that Justine also saw a 66% increase in searches for her business on Google.

By 2017, their results had been phenomenal—their gross tourism revenues were up 125% over 2015.

The Cannery's Net Promoter Score, Trip Advisor rating, and social media following on Facebook have all also increased. In fact, Cassiar Cannery is now used as a best practice example in Destination BC's Learning Centre for how to create TripAdvisor-friendly photography.

To bring these packages together, Justine works with local boat and float plane operators, educators, specialists, spa practitioners, and chefs. When the Cannery does well, everyone does well.



TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

Learn about safety and emergency preparedness, digital marketing, social media marketing, and more through our Learning Centre at: DestinationBC.ca/learning-centre



DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT SUNSHINE COAST

Desolation Sound

DESTINED FOR GREATNESS

Through destination development, we envision BC as a world-class tourism destination which offers remarkable products and experiences that are authentic, driven by visitor demand, and exceed expectations.

While destination marketing helps British Columbia compete for visitors in the short- and medium-term, destination development planning ensures we remain competitive for the long-term.

Destination BC offers destination development planning assistance, in partnership with Indigenous Tourism BC, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, and Regional Destination Management Organizations, to support the ongoing viability of BC's tourism sector.

“Our Sunshine Coast Destination Development Strategy has given us a blueprint for how to move forward and who we need to work with to get it done.”

PAUL KAMON

*Executive Director of
Sunshine Coast Tourism*



Over 100 people contributed to the Destination Development process on the Sunshine Coast by attending community meetings, participating in surveys, and engaging in stakeholder interviews and follow-up conversations. The Sunshine Coast Destination Development strategy has six development themes, and 66 initiatives to support those themes.

One of these 66 initiatives supports a regional vision for visitor services was identified for four communities on the Sunshine Coast—the Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt, Pender Harbour, and Powell River.

The Sunshine Coast Tourism Association was successful in receiving a Rural Dividend Program grant to develop one collaborative visitor services strategy, which will provide a regional vision for visitor services as the tourism sector evolves and continues to grow over the next five years.

This project will explore the management of four existing visitor centres, with underlying goals of providing a memorable visitor experience through a changing industry perspective on working together. This includes:

- Ensuring a seamless transition of visitors to other services,
- Connecting visitors from upper to lower Sunshine Coast,
- Educating Visitor Services employees through product familiarization trips,
- Sharing mobile visitor services for events, and;
- Providing integrated social media visitor services.

This initiative will outline how best to increase visitation across the Sunshine Coast and encourage visitors to stay longer, spend more, and have a better experience, so they will recommend travelling to the Sunshine Coast to their friends and family.



MANAGING GROWTH

We need to proactively manage growth in some of BC's most iconic and popular places, to ensure we preserve the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. A focus on sustainable growth has been identified through the destination development planning efforts throughout the province, as a strong principle and goal of tourism development.

- The Fraser Valley Regional District received funding for the development of tourism and outdoor recreation in the region, including a region-wide impact analysis and an asset management plan.
- Four communities in the West Kootenay area submitted a joint proposal and were successful in receiving funding under the BC Smart Communities pilot program. The municipalities of Castlegar, Nelson, Rossland, and Trail will develop and test a mobility platform that will provide residents and visitors with information about road safety, closures, wait times, and natural disasters. The platform will help people make smart transportation decisions, resulting in safe and efficient travel that decreases accidents and reduces pollutants.
- The Alaska Highway planning area is focusing on its pristine wilderness, and identifying iconic features that a shared identity for Northeastern BC can be built around. These iconic features include the Alaska Highway Corridor, the Liard River Hot Springs, Tumbler Ridge UNESCO Global Geopark, Ancient Forest, and Muskwa-Kechika Management Area.



VISITOR SERVICES

FACEBOOK MESSENGER TRIAL


Golden

CREATING NEW WAYS TO CONNECT WITH VISITORS

The success of any tourism destination rests heavily on the quality of the visitor experience. Today's visitor services are about ensuring information is available when and where visitors need it.

Destination BC works with the entire tourism industry to expand the delivery of services. This includes creating more contemporary and innovative ways to connect with travellers online, and providing the same level of exceptional service that people experience in visitor centres.

In 2018, as part of the Australian ski campaign, Destination BC experimented with using an artificial intelligence chatbot to test automated visitor services to potential ski travellers while they were still at home in Australia.



Facebook Messenger was chosen as the test channel as it is a widely used social media platform among travellers, with over 1.2 billion users per month. In 2018, chatbot answered almost 50% of Destination BC's Australian Ski Campaign post-booking inquiries.

Here's how it worked: advertising messages were placed on Facebook and, when potential visitors clicked through to a tourism business, the chatbot was able to instantly provide responses to their trip planning questions.

"Although it was a small pilot project, it was a great learning experience for us, with 30% of people clicking through to a business website," said Grant Mackay, Vice President, Destination Management. "Most of the questions were resolved by the automated bot. It truly sets the bar for real-time service."

This pilot project helped the team learn more about what they could do in the future, helping hundreds of thousands of visitors each month, in a way that is automated and personalized to each and every potential guest from around the world.

There's more to learn, but it's innovation like this that can help the tourism industry in BC move into the future and be more digitally savvy.



DID YOU KNOW?

\$2.3 million in funding and programs support over 100 community visitor centres who engage with close to 3 million visitors each year.

Revelstoke Mountain Resort



DESTINATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA®

CONNECT WITH US



- ☐ Subscribe to our monthly newsletter for updates on tourism facts and research, partnerships, marketing campaigns, and more: DestinationBC.ca/Subscribe



- ☐ Follow us on Twitter @DestinationBC and LinkedIn



- ☐ Support British Columbia's truly remarkable experiences by promoting #exploreBC with visitors and residents alike. It's a great way to amplify our collective efforts to a worldwide audience!



- ☐ Review Destination BC's resources and programs online for additional inspiration



- ☐ Tourism industry members can gain inspiration and benefit from Destination BC's new online Learning Centre to support their business. Find it online at DestinationBC.ca/learning-centre



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